

# Comanche

National Grassland

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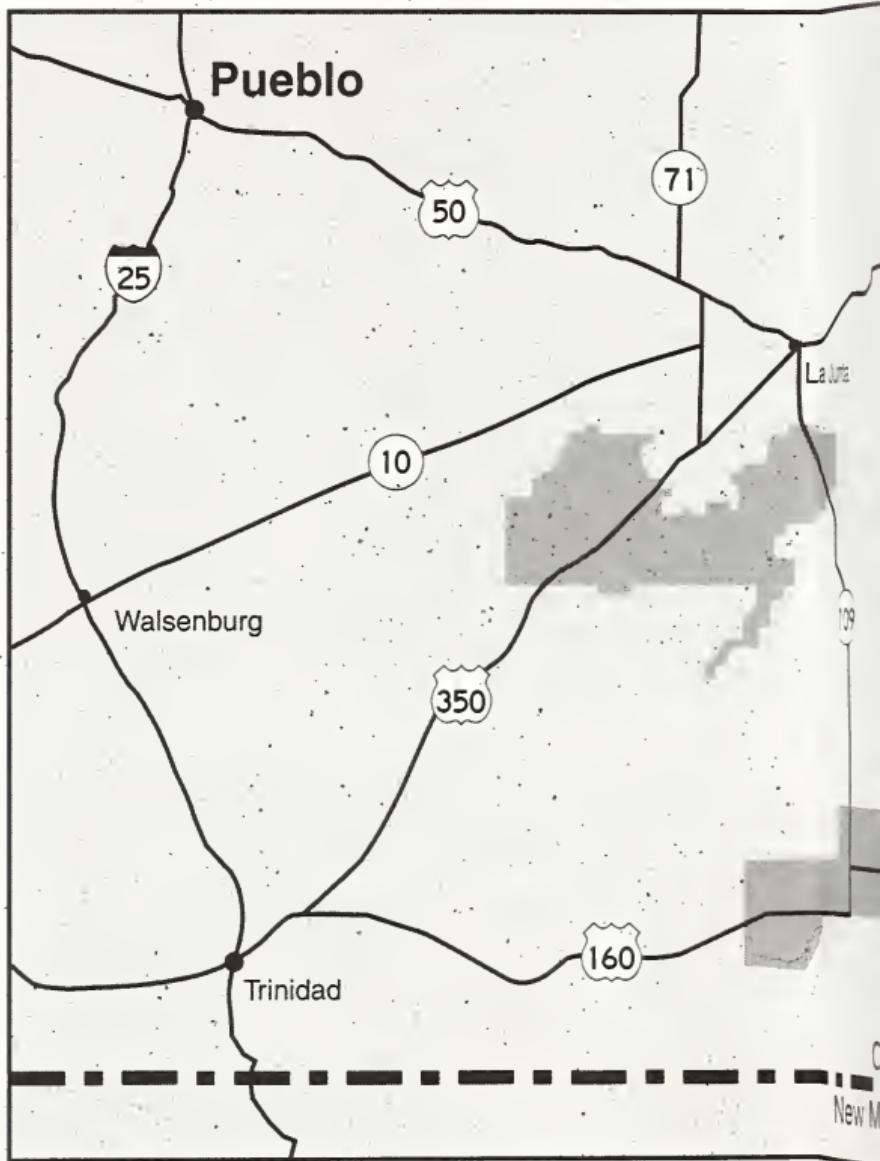


**A Rich History**  
**Natural Beauty**  
**Ancient Artists**  
**Santa Fe Trail Traders**  
**Pioneer Homesteads**

# The Comanche National Grassland

includes over 440,000 acres in southeastern Colorado. In addition to the special features mentioned in this brochure, the Grassland also offers superb opportunities for hiking, biking, horseback riding and camping.

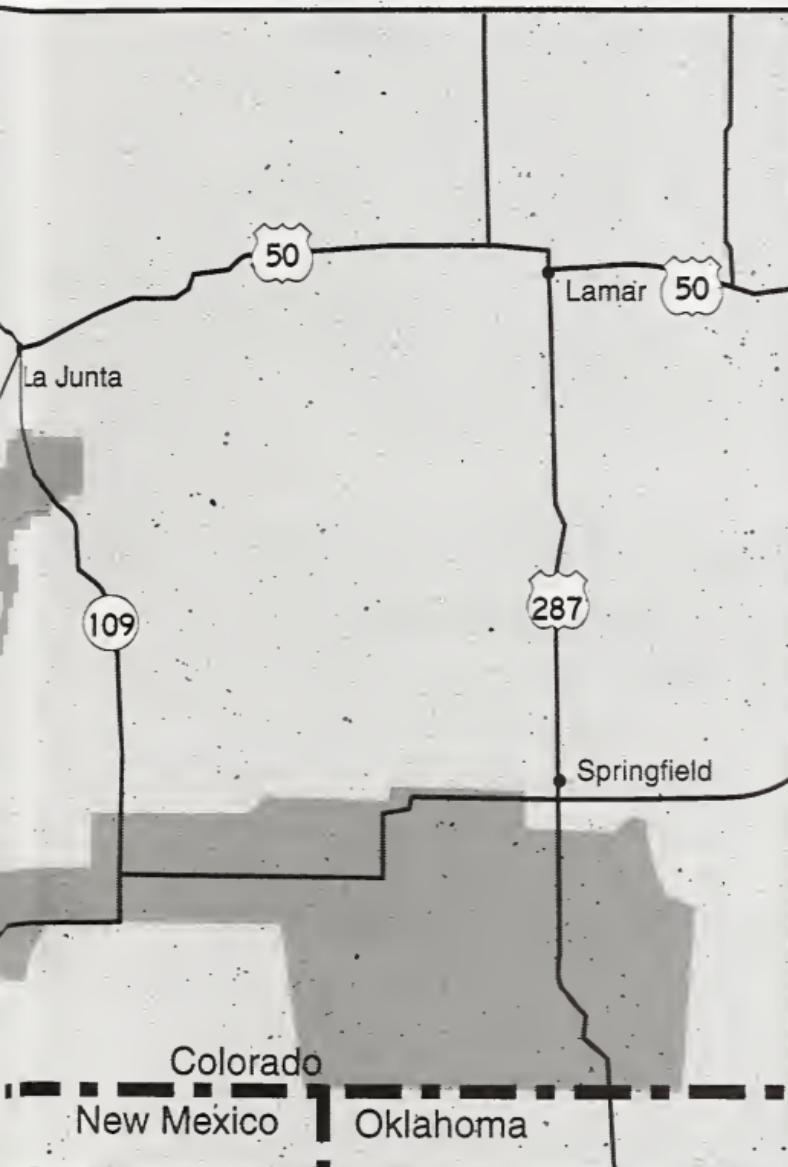
Before you begin your exploration of the Comanche National Grassland, please contact one of the Grassland offices for information on recreational activities, historic sites and trails, and for current road and weather conditions.



Comanche National Grassland  
1420 East 3rd Street  
La Junta, CO 81050  
(719) 384-2181

or

Comanche National Grassland  
P.O. Box 127  
27204 Hwy 287  
Springfield, CO 81073  
(719) 523-6591



# A Rich History

On the Comanche National Grassland you can explore southeastern Colorado's rich history. The Grassland has many stories to tell, from dinosaurs roaming the shoreline of a vast lake 150 million years ago, to Mexican and American traders traveling the Santa Fe Trail 150 years ago.



# Natural Beauty

The Comanche National Grassland is a place of unequaled sunsets, golden prairies, fragrant juniper canyonlands, and extraordinary wildlife viewing.

Rare species such as the Lesser Prairie-Chicken, the Golden Eagle, and the Swift Fox make the Comanche their home. A wide variety of other animals, including pronghorn, coyotes, hawks, burrowing owls, wild turkeys, badgers, prairie dogs, turtles, roadrunners and collared lizards also live here. Visit our resident critters on the Comanche National Grassland.



## **Jurassic Tracks**

Imagine what the landscape looked like 150 million years ago during the Jurassic period. In southeastern Colorado you would have been surrounded by a tropical forest, complete with dinosaurs like apatosaurus and allosaurus.

Today, you can see evidence of the dinosaurs on the Comanche. These Jurassic creatures walked along the shore of a shallow lake, leaving behind their footprints in the mud. Today, these footprints form one of the largest documented dinosaur trackways in North America, with over 1300 visible tracks. Come and explore these creatures of the past on the Comanche National Grassland.

# Ancient Rock Art

Now, imagine this area 1,500 years ago. You would have seen ancient peoples creating rock art on the canyon walls.

Rock art, images pecked or painted onto rock surfaces, held great significance for its creators. The oral traditions of many Native American groups tell of the spiritual power of the rock's surface. Rock art images may have been created to ensure a successful hunt or a year of plentiful food. Think about the lives of those ancient artists when you visit the canyonlands of the Comanche.



## The Santa Fe Trail

If you visited southeastern Colorado between 1821 and 1880 you could have traveled the Santa Fe Trail, bringing goods or military supplies to cities and towns along the Trail. Imagine the long stretches of rugged trail, your water supply running out, your food rations consisting of nothing but flour, bacon, sugar, and salt. You can still travel sections of the Santa Fe Trail by foot or horseback. Journey back to the days of covered wagons on the Comanche National Grassland.



## **Homesteads**

If you were a settler in southeastern Colorado during the 1870s and 1880s your family had to be self-sufficient to survive. You grew much of your own food, obtained meat by hunting and stock raising, and carried water to your home in buckets from the closest creek or spring. The effort of the entire family was essential for daily survival.

The Comanche National Grassland is home to many abandoned homesteads. Imagine these crumbling structures as living homes with the sounds of family echoing through them.



# Please protect your lands.

Rock art, stone tools, charred bones, and rubble from dwellings provide evidence that people thrived on the Comanche National Grassland for thousands of years. Each relic of the past holds a clue that archaeologists use to reconstruct life here long ago. These cultural resources are ancient, fragile, and irreplaceable. If destroyed or removed, the information they reveal is lost forever. And so is a legacy that belongs to us all.

\* NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL LIBRARY



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